

Lord Provost's Pilgrimage Links Edinburgh and Almonte 'Lads'

Written for The Journal
By HARRY J. WALKER.

A "lad" in Edinburgh, Scotland, was linked with a "lad" in Almonte, Canada, in a symbolic pilgrimage on Saturday.

In a sense both "lads" are spiritual "cousins" though they will never meet.

But the Rt. Hon. James Miller, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, journeyed from Princess Street Gardens where the Edinburgh lad stands across from the Castle, repository of Scotland's glory, to honor the lad who stands by the banks of the Little Mississippi in Almonte and looks across at the hills of his homeland.

In so doing the Lord Provost paid homage to the genius of a great Canadian sculptor, the late Dr. R. Tait McKenzie, distinguished son of Almonte, who had given both these lads a spiritual kinship in perpetuating the remembrance of their sacrifice.

It was fitting, too, that the Lord Provost included in his pilgrimage a visit to the Mill of Kintail, once the Summer home of Tait McKenzie from whose studio, overlooking the scenes of his youth, came the inspiration for his soldier-athlete gods now prized in many a salon and campus in Canada, Great Britain and the United States.

In this respect, it was another sort of spiritual reunion for the heart of Tait McKenzie, in its silver chalice, rests in a corner of Scotland that is forever Canada in old St. Cuthbert's churchyard near the Edinburgh lad.

Almonte's Great Sons.

There is probably no section in the Ottawa Valley that has produced so many distinguished sons and sent them forth in outstanding service to the far corners of the earth as has this little town of Almonte. Just scan this partial list:

Sir Edward Peacock, who worked his way through McGill driving a Montreal tram, in the course of his life span became Governor of the Bank of England, Chancellor of the Duchy of Cornwall, financial adviser to Royalty. Now, at 81, he is Chairman of the Commonwealth Finance Corporation recently set up to provide money for Commonwealth developments projects. He thus becomes Churchill's hope for the resuscitation of Britain.

Major MacIntosh Bell, distinguished soldier, explorer, and

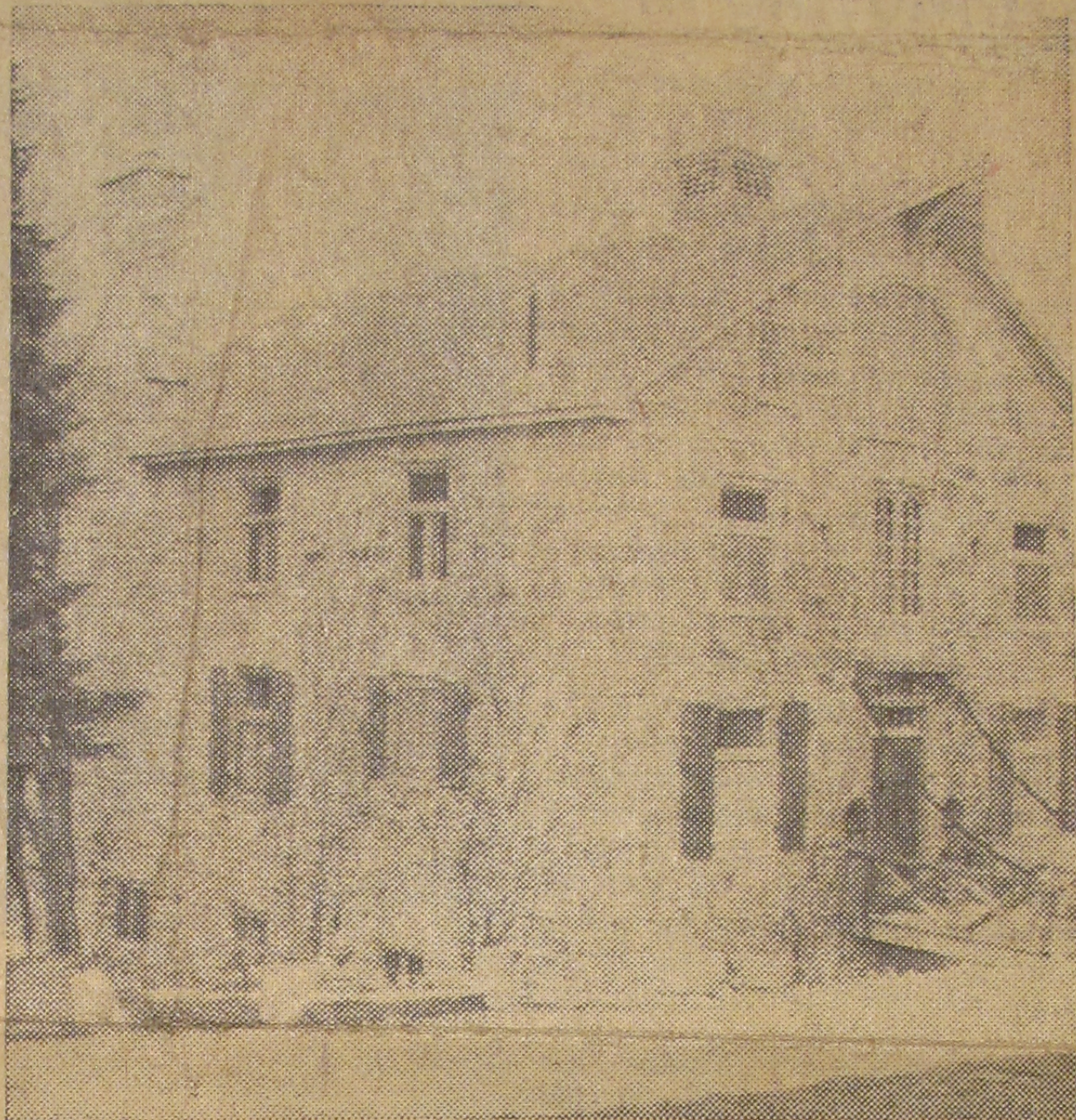
Dr. James Naismith, inventor of basketball (born near the Mill of Kintail on the ninth line of Ramsay.)

Rev. R. E. Knowles, brilliant preacher and author, who produced the only great Canadian novel to date in "The Under-tow".

Professor W. B. Munro, of Harvard.

Professor W. Playfair of Tokyo University.

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THE MILL OF KINTAIL—It was to this historic landmark in Almonte that the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Rt. Hon. James Miller came on Saturday to pay homage to the great Canadian sculptor, Dr. R. Tait McKenzie.

connected it to the river bank by a drawbridge over a moat.

Entering over the drawbridge one is faced by the weathered portal, iron bound, that has stood sentinel throughout the years. Inside, the great hand-hewn beams of white pine stretch from end to end, imparting an atmosphere of ageless strength. Everything about the interior reflects the sturdy simplicity of the pioneer period—the wide casement windows, the furniture and the Mexican and Indian pottery, reposing on hexagonal pedestals cut from the shafting of the Mill.

McKenzie utilized much of the original equipment of the Mill in his restoration decor. His guest book—signed by Governors General and Prime Ministers—reposes on the quaint stand where Miller John Baird computed his toll against pawky Andrew Toshack and other settlers.

Canadian Masterpieces.

Occupying the entire upper storey is the sculptor's studio where the light cascades through urns of colored glass. Here, the dreams of his creative genius were given form and substance.

In this workshop, left as McKenzie last used it when he met his own Call, is the model of the famous Edinburgh lad and this shrine that the Lord Provost had come 4,000 miles to see.

McKenzie transferred his genius from athletic to soldier types after World War I in which he served as a surgeon with the Royal Army Medical Corps.

In him surgeon and sculptor met on common ground as he applied his extraordinary blend of anatomical skill and artistic

border land of life and-death.

Fittingly inscribed under the Edinburgh lad are the words:

"If it be life that waits,
I shall live forever unconquered.
If death, I shall die at last
Strong in my pride and free."

In the Rosamond Memorial of the Almonte lad there shines the same theme. Alec Rosamond, descendant of Jacobite Macdonnells, left his wealthy Almonte home to die amid the shambles of Courcellette. In his will there was a provision for a memorial to the men of Almonte who fell in action. With a fine sense of the appropriate, the Rosamond family requested that the face be not a portrait. And so Tait McKenzie depicted a young officer with his gaze intent on something afar—perhaps a bursting Verey light, perhaps a star.

Mrs. McKenzie, wife of the sculptor, who died just recently, and who was talented in her own right, has captured the mood of the memorial in dedicatory verse:

"He watches—in a little northern town,
Through Winter cold and parching Summer heat,
Where quiet folk go simply up and down
O'er stony bridge and narrow, crooked street."

And now the Lord Provost of Edinburgh in his pilgrimage to Almonte has spanned the years and linked the spirit of these boys and a million others by whose loss this jittery world is the poorer now. But they still convey to us who dwell in a supersonic twilight something of the endless potentiality of life, when, for all of us at some time, Pan piped in a nearby thicket in a world that was once young

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course of his life span became
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Professor Stuart C. McLeod of
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Rev. C. Ford Brown.
New Haydon.

Garry.
were classmates

of McKenzie in the famous
Almonte school of Peter Camp-
bell MacGregor.

whose contribution to Canadian
national life has never been ac-
corded its proper recognition.

Most of them are dead now
and several came home to die
within sound of the old school
bell. (A modern product of Al-
monte, whom Ottawa almost
honored as Mayor is our own
Leonard Coulter.)

Honored Native Returns.

Tait McKenzie returned to his
native Almonte famous in the
salons of the world.

Like Phidias, he had sought
and found among athletes the
Greek ideal of physical perfec-
tion. He gave it expression in
lines flowing with light clean
rhythm. In fact, McKenzie be-
came the reincarnation of those
great sculptors of Greece, and
no artist since the golden age of
the Peloponnese has taken the
athlete's beauty as his constant
theme.

For his purpose he sought a
rugged sanctuary in Baird's Mill
near the old pioneer concession
once known as Bennie's Corners
around which clustered a settle-
ment of transplanted and brawl-
ing Scots.

Historic Kintail.

To this wilderness settlement
his father, Rev. William Mc-
Kenzie, came from Edinburgh
and a civilized presbytery, as
"Meenister" to these hardy
Gaels. These settlers walked
miles through swamp and bush
to the auld kirk to hear the
preaching of the Word with its
emphasis on Duty, Order, Re-
straint, Obedience—words that
are forgotten today in the litany
of a Neo-Paganism running a
Tam o' Shanter race to hell.

Tait McKenzie renamed it
Mill of Kintail after the ances-
tral home of the McKenzies
where the peaks of Kintail
pierce the mists of the West
Highland littoral and where, at
Loch Duich, the claymores of
the clansmen fought off the
Viking hordes all through a long
Summer day until the Dragon
boats put back to sea.

In his program of reclama-
tion, McKenzie preserved and
projected the pioneer motif in
the Mill that had weathered 125
Winters. The Mill is one of few
remaining types of early colonial
design. To give it the setting
of a Scottish keep McKenzie

ernors General and Prime Min-
isters—reposes on the quaint
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stimuli to restore the shattered
fragments of youth. Profoundly
moved by this outpouring of the
chalice of youth, he concen-
trated on dedicating their quick-
ened spirit in deathless bronze.

And so he gave the world a
series of masterpieces.

In the lobby of the House of
Commons in Ottawa he gave us
gallant Col. Baker, obliterated
with his command at Sanctuary
Wood; in the Canadian Archives
he has depicted young Capt. Guy
Drummond, scion of a noble
Scottish-Canadian family, who
died on the gas-stricken field of
Langemarck. In memorials at
Cambridge University and at
Pennsylvania he has honored
English and American boys who
left the campus and their songs
to die on the poppied plains of
Picardy. But in two outstand-
ing efforts McKenzie reached his
peak of achievement.

Two Noted 'Lads'.

These were in the Edinburgh
lad—focal point of "The Call"
in Princess Street Gardens, and
in "The Volunteer" in his own
home town of Almonte. In these,
much alike in motif, one senses
the verve and vitality of young
life. In both one sees the search-
ing of soul in response to the
dictates of a supreme hour.
Material things—the dross of
earth—fall away for these boys
as they look afar into some

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Rita Delaying Divorce Pending Settlement

NEW

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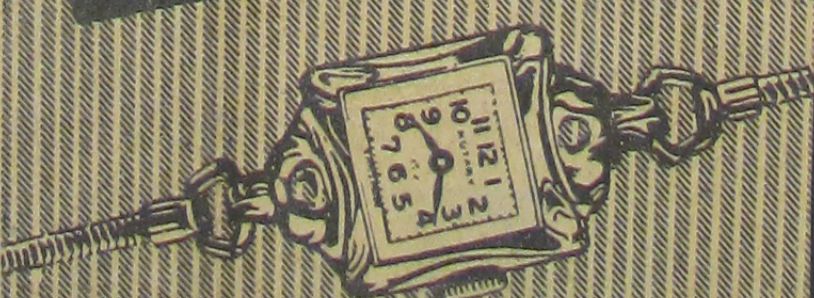
Spar
right
Brid
Kore
for

**YOU'LL NEVER
BE LATE**

with a

**ROTARY
WATCH**

ROTA



Globe & Mail Press
March 25th 1975

PAGE 33

SCOTT YOUNG

A McKenzie cult starts to flower

When one mentions a man and obviously doesn't do him justice, I guess the only way is to go back and do better. I should warn you I'm not going to do him justice today, either—but I may point the way for others to have a look and make up their own minds. A few weeks ago when I wrote about the Canadian sports art collection being put together by Carol Erb of the National Sport and Recreation Centre in Ottawa, I mentioned that Tait McKenzie's male nudes would be a principal part, and that he was a much neglected Canadian sculptor. What I found subsequently was that there is something close to a Tait McKenzie cult. Every member called me or wrote a letter. Many sent me information about where a major collection of McKenzie's work may be seen each summer. Words were underlined in one booklet to the effect that McKenzie has been considered by some "as the greatest sculptor of athletes the world has ever known." I was sent quotations from an English article saying that McKenzie's nudes of young men "produced types of strength and beauty not exactly like the statues of Greece, but in their way almost equally beautiful." The writer of that article thought McKenzie was an American, incidentally, which was not unusual for his time (he died in 1938) because in his lifetime the ping made by Canadian art in the ears of the world was even much fainter than it is now.



Faint ears for art

Anyway, now an announcement is imminent giving dates for a tour of Canadian cities by the sports art collection this summer. And if you don't catch the collection on one of its stops, you might consider a trip to the McKenzie collection of more than 70 pieces at the Mill of Kintail, near Almonte, about 30 miles west of Ottawa off Highway 29. The stone mill, built in 1830 and restored 100 years later by McKenzie, now is owned and operated as a McKenzie studio-museum by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority. It's open to visitors from June 30 to Oct. 15, from 10 to 6 every day except Tuesday (closed all day) and Sunday (2-6). Also, avoid the lunch hour, 12-2, when it's always closed.

Still, everything I read about McKenzie reinforces my original feeling: how could his memory be so neglected in this country? Although a gymnasium at York University is named after him, and both York and U of T have some of his sculptures, the fact that he lived so much out of this country no doubt was a factor in his lack of wider public recognition here.

Much of the command of human anatomy that made him famous as an athletic sculptor came from his role as a teacher of anatomy. First he was at McGill (he was also—not related—fluent in French). Later he was a full professor in the faculty of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and director of physical education there. He served four years (1914-18) in the Royal Army Medical Corps. His methods for rehabilitation of the wounded—an extension of his practice of rehabilitative medicine in Montreal—later were adopted by the French. His orthopedic surgery techniques were used by the armed services in both Britain and the U.S.

But part of his heart was always in the Almonte region, where he went to school before going on to Lisgar Collegiate in Ottawa. He played in the ruins of the old stone mill as a boy. When he restored the building as a summer home and studio he renamed it Mill of Kintail after the Scots Highland stronghold of the McKenzie clan. All this we know much better than his art—which makes him particularly a Canadian of his time in that his art, until now, was always secondary to what we might call today his "straight" occupation.

Tait McKenzie

One Of The Immortals

By Ernest Rivers Macpherson

LAST June a large gathering of Scots and Canadians of Scottish extraction met at the Old Mill of Kintail near Almonte, Ontario. The meeting, held under the aegis of the Clan Chattan Association, was arranged in order to pay homage to the memory of that great Canadian, Major Robert Tait McKenzie.

Tait McKenzie was a remarkable man. He was really four remarkable men, for he gained world recognition in four professions — as a surgeon and anatomist; as a physical educator; as a leader in the science of rehabilitation of the severely wounded (as many Canadian veterans of the First World War will remember with gratitude), and as an artist and sculptor. He was also a soldier, an athlete, a teacher and a writer.

In the First World War he was commissioned in the Royal Army Medical Corps and held several important posts both as physician and surgeon. He eventually was appointed to the staff of the Director of Medical Services at the War Office in London. Here he was given full opportunity to

of fatigue over the nerves and muscles of the face of an athlete, showing, successively, effort, breathlessness, fatigue and exhaustion. These new techniques became the standard guide in the calisthenics of the English-speaking nations. McKenzie laid the foundations for the four-minute mile. The United States, realising what he had done in the field of physical and mental rehabilitation, made him president of the American Academy of Physical Medicine after the First War. The French military authorities followed suit and adopted his methods in their text books. Thus, disabled veterans of World War I's "Big Three" owe him a great debt.

Some of his world-famous monuments include the Dominion Confederacy Memorial in the Houses of Parliament, Ottawa, Captain Guy Drummond in the Public Archives, Ottawa, Lt.-Col. George Harold Baker—the only Canadian M.P. to be killed in action in the First World War—in the lobby of the House of Commons, Ottawa. In the U.S.A. there are the Radmor Memorial, Pennsylvania; the Girard College War Memorial and many others. In the United Kingdom: General James Wolfe in Greenwich Royal Park; "Blighty" in the King's Collection at Balmoral Castle, and the classic Scottish-American War Memorial in Edinburgh. There are also countless portraits, plaques and friezes.

McKenzie was imbued with a great sense of duty. "The Call," he used to term it, and one notices this theme in most of his military monuments, as witness the inspirational lines under the frieze in the Scottish-American War Memorial:

*If it be life that waits,
I shall live forever unconquered;
If death, I shall die at last,
Strong in my pride and free.*

monial in Edinburgh.

He was born in 1867 in Ramsay Township, Lanark County, Ontario, and was the son of William McKenzie who emigrated to Canada from Kelso in Scotland in 1858 and became Minister of the Free Church of Scotland in Almonte.

While he was an undergraduate at McGill University he showed promise as a sports champion and won the All-round Gymnastic Championship. He soon acquired brilliance in the medical profession and developed a wide practice in Montreal. Soon afterwards he was appointed house physician to the then Governor-General of Canada, the Marquis of Aberdeen.

As an aid to his lectures in anatomy Tait McKenzie made four experimental models of the progress

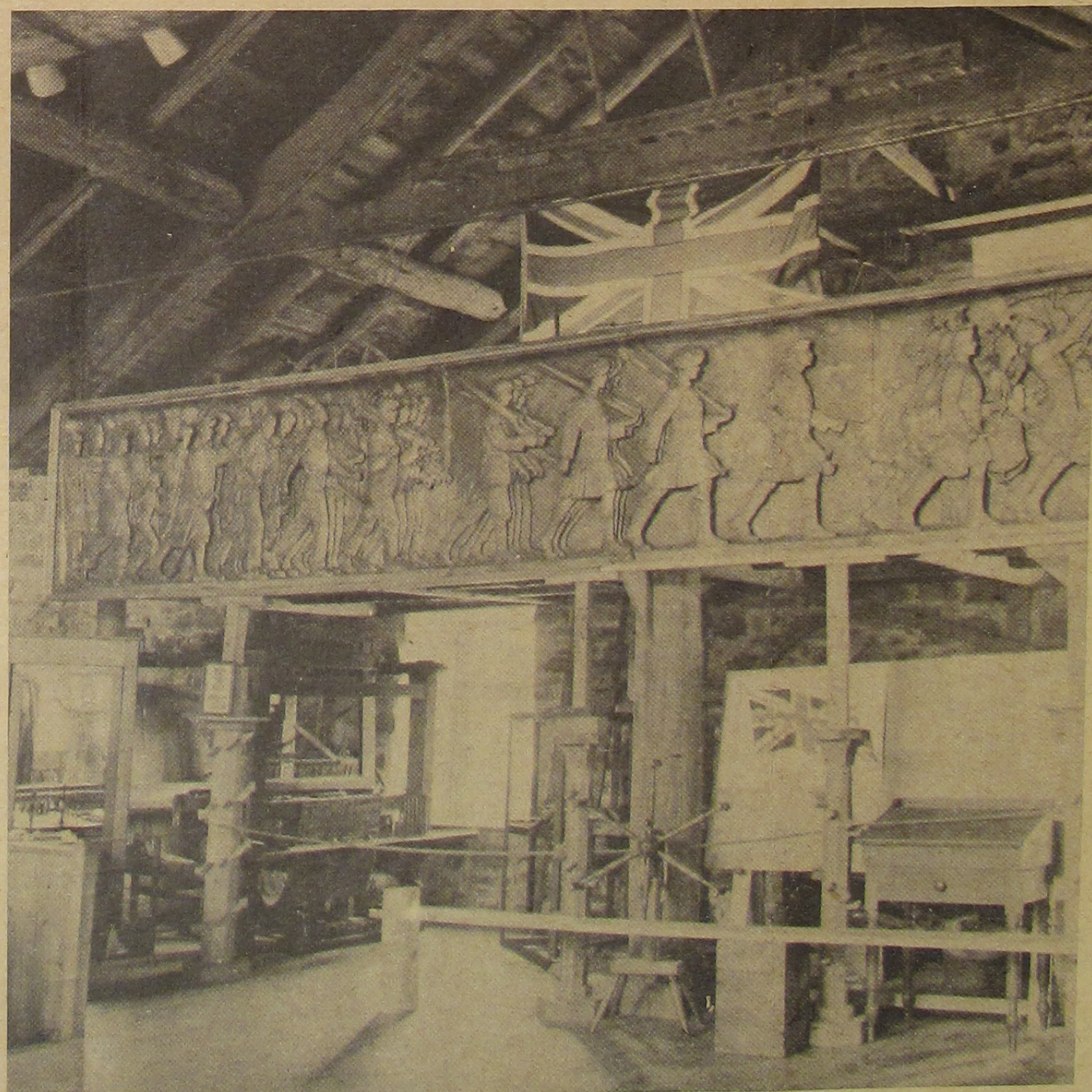
Not long before he died in 1938, he bought the Old Mill of Kintail near Almonte, which he named after the old home of the head of the McKenzie Clan in the Western Highlands of Scotland. Here he established his studio and here can be seen the original plaster casts of most of his masterpieces together with other historic relics.

The Mill, built in 1828, has virtually become a national shrine and is visited each year by many well known societies and individuals.

The Mill is now the private residence of Major and Mrs. Leys. They will always be glad to welcome, by arrangement, veterans who are interested in viewing the Canadian home of one of the world's "Immortals".



Major Tait McKenzie as he was when on the staff of the Director-General of Medical Services at the War Office in London during World War I.



An interior view of Tait McKenzie's home near Almonte, Ont., showing a replica of a frieze from his far-famed Scottish-American war memorial.

When was the Boy Scout statue designed?—(W. B.) Back in 1914, Dr. Charles D. Hart, president of the Philadelphia Scout Council, first conceived the idea of having the late Dr. R. Tait McKenzie, noted sculptor, fashion a statue to represent Philadelphia scouting. Several scout parades were held and from their number McKenzie chose Asa Franklin Hoover as his model. After the statue was completed, many statuettes were made from it and sold widely. When the Boy Scout Headquarters, 22d and Winter sts., on the Parkway, was dedicated Dec. 8, 1930, this figure was used. But in 1937 Dr. McKenzie decided to change his earlier work. At a Scout Convention he picked a model, Douglas Shannon, a pupil at the Vare Junior High School, for his restudy of the scout statue. It was unveiled June 12, 1937, at 22d and Winter.

PHILA-BULLETIN
As a child I was taken

SCULPTOR-TEACHER

DR. M'KENZIE DEAD

Noted Canadian Executed
Many Memorials—Planned
to Visit Premier King

Philadelphia, April 29. — World-renowned sculptor and expert in physical education, Dr. Robert Tait McKenzie is dead at the age of 70.

He died suddenly at his home here last night of heart disease. A week before he planned to go to Ottawa to confer with Prime Minister Mackenzie King and other government officials on the memorial he designed to the late Sir Charles Doughty, Dominion archivist. Then he had planned a reunion with boyhood friends at his native Almonte, Ont., where he had a summer residence.

In Ottawa, Mr. Mackenzie King expressed keen regret. He had known Dr. McKenzie for 30 years.

Retired professor of physical education at the University of Pennsylvania to which he was attached for more than three decades, and before that, medical director of physical training at McGill, Dr. McKenzie was even more widely known as a sculptor.

His work stands in public places throughout the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

Two of his pieces are in the parliament buildings at Ottawa—the memorial of 60 years of confederation erected in the hall of fame as the gift of Canadian resident in the United States, and the Baker memorial.

During the great war he was an inspector of physical training for the British forces with the temporary rank of major.

His widow, the former Ethel O'Neil of Hamilton, survives, with two brothers and a sister.



SCOTTISH AMERICAN WAR MEMORIAL.
PRINCES STREET GARDENS, EDINBURGH.

Millar & Lang, Ltd., Art Publishers, Glasgow.
New Color-crayon Process from original drawing by Andrew Allan.

POST



CARD.

ADDRESS

Made in
Great
Britain.

SCOTTISH AMERICAN WAR MEMORIAL, WEST
PRINCES STREET GARDENS—Erected by Scottish
Americans in memory of Scottish Soldiers who fell
in the Great War. The central figure "The Call
1914" looks towards the Castle Rock.

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